

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 SAJ-01 IO-10 /063 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2622

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LISBON 2396

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: USG POSTURE ON ELECTIONS

1. IT NOW CLEAR THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE INTERPRETED AS A VICTORY FOR SOCIALISTS AND DEFEAT FOR COMMUNISTS. CUNHAL IS ALREADY CRYING FOUL AND FELLOW TRAVELLING MDP IS SAYING IT IS WHAT THE PARTY DOES, NOT THE VOTE IT RECEIVES, THAT COUNTS. SOME LOCAL JOURNALISTS ARE POINTEDLY COMMENTING THAT ELECTIONS CAN'T STOP THE REVOLUTION. OTHERS DOWNGRADE SOCIALIST VICTORY AS A VOTE FOR A CONCEPT, NOT A PARTY.

2. ALL OF THIS WILL PUT CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON AFM, WHICH DOESN'T LIKE SOARES TO START WITH. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, AFM IS HYPER-SENSITIVE TO CRITICISM BY INTERNATIONAL PRESS. IF PRESS DISMISSES ELECTIONS LIGHTLY OR FAILS TO EMPHASIZE CALM ATMOSPHERE AND ORDERLY PROCESS, SOME AFM MEMBERS WILL TAKE A "WHAT'S THE USE ATTITUDE." COMMUNISTS WILL BE RIGHT THERE TO AGREE. THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY TRY TO DOWNGRADE THE ELECTIONS

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AND DIVERT THE AFM FROM ANY FURTHER DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES. THIS

DANGER MAY EXPLAIN COSTA GOMES PERSONAL APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL PRESS TO REPORT ACCURATELY ON ELECTIONS. ELECTIONS OFFER A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO DISRUPT PRESENT COZY PCP-AFM RELATIONSHIP, AND WE SHOULD MOVE RAPIDLY TO EXPLOIT THEM.

3. IN LIGHT OF ABOVE, I BELIEVE FAVORABLE COMMENT BY DEPARTMENT, BOTH ON RECORD AND IN BACKGROUNDEERS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AND HELPFUL TO MODERATE FORCES WITHIN AFM.

4. RECOMMEND THAT ON AND OFF RECORD COMMENT BY USG SPOKESMEN STRESS:

(A) WELCOMING AFM'S FULFILLMENT OF ITS PROMISE IN HOLDING FREE ELECTIONS; (B) FAVORABLE IMPRESSION CAUSED BY MASSIVE, ORDERLY TURNOUT BY PORTUGUESE PEOPLE; (C) POLITICAL MATURITY OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE AFTER ALMOST HALF CENTURY OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE. USG SPOKESMEN SHOULD AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF EXCESSIVE SATISFACTION WITH RESULTS. COMMUNIST DEFEAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.

5. SUGGEST WE URGE OUR ALLIES TO DO THE SAME.
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